

# DANIELA HORTA SÁENZ

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<https://daniela-horta-saenz.github.io>

## CURRENT POSITION

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<b>PhD Candidate</b> , Aix-Marseille School of Economics	September 2020 - Present
<b>Teaching Fellow (ATER)</b> , Sciences Po Paris	Present

## RESEARCH FIELDS

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Development Economics, Political Economy and Conflict

## EDUCATION

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<b>Aix-Marseille School of Economics</b> PhD in Economics PhD committee: Nicolas Berman, Timothée Demont, Sandra Sequeira, Micaela Sviatschi, Olivier Vanden and Tanguy van Ypersele.	2020 - Present
<b>University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy</b> Sponsor: Prof. Oeindrila Dube	Spring 2023
<b>University of Konstanz</b>	Summer 2022
<b>Aix-Marseille School of Economics</b> MA in Theoretical and Empirical Economics	2018 - 2020
<b>Universitat de Barcelona</b>	Spring 2018
<b>Universidad Externado de Colombia</b> BA in Economics	2014 - 2018

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

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<b>BFI UoChicago</b> , Sexual Violence in South Africa: Institutional and Grassroots Solutions	2023
<b>ANR RA-Covid-19</b> , Experiment on stress and cognitive capacity	2020
<b>AMSE Internal Funding</b> , Experiment on stress and cognitive capacity	2020
<b>AMSE PhD Grant</b> , École Doctorale de Sciences Économiques et de Gestion d'Aix-Marseille	2020 - 2023
<b>Honorary registration</b> , Universitat de Barcelona Best marks in "Political Economics of Spain and the European Union"	Spring 2018
<b>Honorary registration</b> , Universidad Externado de Colombia Received scholarships for best marks	2015 - 2018

## PUBLICATION

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**Exposure to worrisome topics can increase cognitive performance when incentivized by a performance goal** [Forthcoming Scientific Reports]  
with Timothée Demont and Eva Raiber

**Abstract:** Worrysome topics, such as climate change, economic crises, or pandemics including the Covid-19, are increasingly present and pervasive due to digital media and social networks. Do worries triggered by such topics affect the cognitive capacities of young adults? In an online experiment during the Covid-19 pandemic (N=1503), we test how the cognitive performance of university students responds when exposed to topics discussing (i) current adverse mental health consequences of social restrictions or (ii) future labor market hardships linked to the economic contraction. Moreover, we study how such a response is affected by a performance goal. We find that the labor market topic increases cognitive performance when it is motivated by a goal, consistent with a ‘tunneling effect’ of scarcity or a positive stress effect. However, we show that the positive reaction is mainly concentrated among students with larger financial and social resources, pointing to an inequality-widening mechanism. Conversely, we find limited support for a negative stress effect or a ‘cognitive load effect’ of scarcity, as the mental health topic has a negative but insignificant average effect on cognitive performance. Yet, there is a negative response among psychologically vulnerable individuals when the payout is not conditioned on reaching a goal.

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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### **Nation-building in post-conflict settings: Evidence from South Africa**

with Thomas Gautier and Gianluca Russo

**Abstract:** How do states rebuild nations after a major conflict? Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) have emerged as one of the most common interventions to achieve this objective. Despite their popularity, little is known about their efficacy to foster reconciliation and nation building. We fill this gap by studying the seminal TRC established in South Africa after the end of the Apartheid. To measure exposure to TRC across South African municipalities, we leverage quasi-random variation in media coverage of the TRC message. South African municipalities with higher historical exposure to TRC on media have lower levels of violence today. This effect is driven by improved nation building and higher trust towards post-Apartheid institutions. Exploiting daily variation in TRC hearings and mediatic exposure in the short run, we bolster our interpretation that our long-run results are forged in the years of TRC activity. The same evidence suggests that our results are driven by the coverage of TRC on media as opposed to generic media exposure.

### **Collateral damage: The impact of forced eradication of illicit crops on human capital**

with Anderson Tami-Patiño

**Abstract:** The role of eradication policies in decreasing drug trade, insecurity, and ultimately fostering development remains largely debated. This paper examines the unintended consequences of aerial fumigation of coca on human capital accumulation and its medium-term socioeconomic impact in Colombia. Employing a spatial regression discontinuity design and utilizing newly digitized data on the exact areas subjected to aerial spraying, we find that eradication increases dropout and failure rates in the short term. A key mechanism is the negative income shock experienced by households. Furthermore, we document that even after the ban on aerial spraying in 2015, villages exposed to eradication exhibit worse socioeconomic outcomes, including lower schooling, higher child labor, increased early marriage, and deteriorating living conditions.

### **Conflict and Educational Mobility: Evidence from Colombia**

**Abstract:** Does conflict impact socioeconomic mobility? This paper examines the extent to which individuals’ exposure to conflict affects intergenerational mobility in education attainment in Colombia. Exploiting exogenous variation in conflict intensity caused by the distance to the nearest military base and US military assistance. I find that the armed conflict reduces the transmission of parents’ educational outcomes on children’s outcomes. An effect driven by the breakdown in transmission in highly educated families. This disruption occurs mainly due to conflict exposure in early childhood and exposure to conflict-related displacement and sexual violence. Notably, weakening the parent-child link is translated into a general increase in downward mobility and a decrease in upward mobility. Destruction of educational resources and a decrease in children’s aspirations are the likely mechanisms for the observed effect.

## CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

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**2023:** PhD Seminar (AMSE); Brown Bag Seminar at Harris School of Public Policy (UChicago); Transitional Justice and Democratic Stability (UChicago); CAGE Summer School (University of Warwick).

**2022:** Annual Meeting of the French Economics Association (University of Dijon); Brown Bag Seminar (University of Konstanz); Annual Meeting of the European Economic Association (Bocconi); PhD Seminar

(AMSE); Workshop on Conflict (Royal-Holloway & Queen Mary); Annual Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (U Pacifico).

## TEACHING

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Seminar Teacher in Public Policy (Sciences Po Menton)	2023
Seminar Teacher in International Trade and Finance (Sciences Po Menton)	2022
TA in Microeconomics III (Univesidad Externado de Colombia)	2016
TA in Accounting and Financial Analysis (Univesidad Externado de Colombia)	2015

## ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

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Organizer PhD course ‘Selected topics on PhD and research’ (AMSE)	2021 - 2023
PhD Internal Seminar (co-organizer)	2021 - 2023
Data collection volunteer at the Colombian Observatory on Transparency and Anti-corruption	2020

## LANGUAGES AND COMPUTER SKILLS

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**Languages** Spanish (Native), English (Fluent), French (Intermediate)

**Software** Stata (very good), R (very good), ArcGis (good), Python (good), L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X (good)